

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend Claims 1, 3, and 6 as follows. The changes to the claims are indicated with underlining for added text and strikethrough for deleted text.

1. (Currently Amended) A method of generating a document comprising the steps of:

permitting access to a document creation system by an authorized
~~authorised~~ user;

recording user data identifying the user;

generating document data defining a document;

generating verification data from the user data and the document data;

recording authentication data corresponding to the verification data; and

printing the document utilizing ~~utilising~~ the document data and the verification data, so that the document includes a machine readable portion usable to verify the authenticity thereof.

2. (Original) A method according to claim 1 including generating a user identification record and storing the record for comparison with the user data when a user attempts to access the document creation system.
3. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 2 wherein the user data and the user identification comprise data from a fingerprint scanner ~~or another biometric device~~.

4. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 1 wherein the user data is derived from data stored on a portable data carrier, the user data being generated when a physical characteristic of the user matches data stored on the portable data carrier.
5. (Original) A method according to claim 4 wherein the portable data carrier is a smart card.
6. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 4 wherein the physical characteristics of the user is a fingerprint ~~or other biometric data~~.
7. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 1 wherein the authentication data is stored in a document verification database.
8. (Original) A method according to claim 7 wherein the verification data takes the form of a bar code, symbol or other machine readable indicium.
9. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 7 wherein the verification data is a printed symbol or code readable optically, and contains data which corresponds at least partially to the user data and the related document data contained in the authentication data which is stored in the document verification database.
10. (Original) A method according to claim 9 wherein the verification data comprises one or more of the following: details of an operator generating the document, date/time stamps, a unique document and/or institution code, partial or relevant details from the document, digital signature of the operator and/or competent authority, a digital certificate, a facial image of a relevant person; a digital image of a hand written signature, a fingerprint or other biometric data, or textual information.

11. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 9 wherein the verification data is generated in an encrypted form.

12. (Previously Presented) A method of verifying the authenticity of a document generated by the method of any one of claims 1 to 11, the method including the steps of:

reading verification data from the document;

retrieving authentication data corresponding to the verification data and comparing the verification data with the authentication data; and

indicating that the document is authentic if the compared data matches.

13. (Original) A method according to claim 12 wherein the verification data is encrypted, the method including the step of decrypting the verification data read from the document.

14. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 12 wherein the authentication data is retrieved from a central database in an on-line process.

15. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 12 wherein the authentication data is data derived from the document itself or from the bearer thereof.

16. (Original) A system for generating documents comprising:

a document creation station operable by a user to input document data and to generate printed documents based on the document data;

access control means arranged to generate user data corresponding to an authorized ~~authorised~~ user;

processor means for generating verification data derived from the document data and the user data, the verification data being applied to the printed document; and

a database for storing an authentication record corresponding to the verification data, for use in authentication of the document.

17. (Original) A system according to claim 16 including at least one document reading device for reading the verification data on a document, and processor means for comparing the verification data read from the document with authentication data.
18. (Original) A system according to claim 17 including communication means for transferring authentication data from the database, for comparison with the verification data read from the document.